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ABSTRACT

A K-6 physical education/classroom program is presented which is designed to promote cardiovascular fitness and respiratory efficiency along with physical, mental, emotional, and social health. It is pointed out that this program costs little, is appropriate for all ages, is simple to put into effect, can be interdisciplinary, and can be extended outside of the classroom. The program is divided into the following three segments, of which one or more may be used: (1) the physical education segment (walking, running, or jogging during physical education class); (2) the classroom segment (integration with subject areas); and (3) the outside school segment (running in weekend road races). A letter to educators, a detailed introduction, and specific steps for implementation are included. Material in the appendix includes a sample letter to parents, names and addresses in the San Diego area where race entry forms are obtainable, the availability of a videotape of this program, and a sample of the "It's Funner to be a Runner" T-shirt design. This document was selected by the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) Task Force on Public Confidence as descriptive of a promising practice or exemplary project worthy of highlighting for the California educational community. (EM)

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IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER!

CAJON VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
189 Roanoke Road, Box 1007
El Cajon, California 92022

1981-82

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It's Funner to be a Runner

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: PREFACE LETTER	1
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: INTRODUCTION	2
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: SPECIFIC STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	4
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: PHYSICAL EDUCATION SEGMENT	6
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: SOME HELPFUL HINTS	9
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: CLASSROOM SEGMENT	10
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL SEGMENT	13
APPENDIX	15

Remember: It's "Funner" to be a Runner

January 5, 1982

Dear Fellow Educators:

I have attempted to document what I consider to be a very successful and well accepted physical education/classroom program. I have put it together with a lot of detail. I have done this in an attempt to be helpful, and in no way am I suggesting that anyone use the program just as it is written. I do hope that you will review the program and use the parts that best suit your grade level and needs.

If you decide to implement all three segments of the program, I think you will find it extremely interesting and exciting; however, if you feel that you would rather work with segment one only, or segments one and two together, I feel that you would find the program equally rewarding.

If you decide to participate with the kids as they walk, jog and run, that will certainly add to the program. However, the program will be successful if you decide that you cannot participate, as long as you show your desire and enthusiasm for them to be successful in the program.

I look forward to hearing about the positive experiences that come about for you and the children with whom you work. I am anxious for you to see the things that I have seen from the kids.

I ask you to contact me if I can be of any help. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Peter P. Saccone

Peter P. Saccone

(619) 462-5890

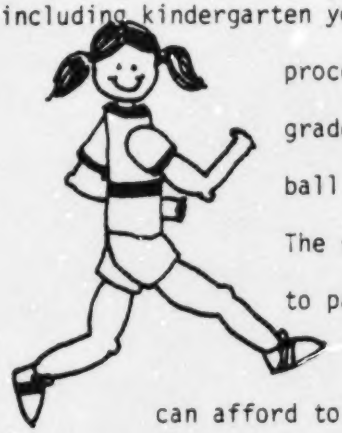
INTRODUCTION

It's "Funner" to be a Runner is a physical education/classroom program that is designed to promote sound cardiovascular fitness and respiratory efficiency, while at the same time promote sound mental, emotional and social health. While the program is in process, the children develop a positive self-image as they find themselves accomplishing physical feats that most adults would envy. For many it's the first time that they feel accomplishment in their lives—they walk, jog or run a number of laps or miles around their school field—they cross the finish line at a road race on a Saturday or Sunday. What feelings! They accomplish all of this without the direct help of an umpire, a judge, a referee, a parent or a coach. They have to do it by themselves! They know this, and when they do it they are proud.

The It's "Funner" to be a Runner program is called a physical education/classroom program because the numerous benefits that are derived from the aerobic activity are carried into the classroom. The children who participate in the program get addicted to their feelings of well-being, and they enjoy knowing that they are special. In addition to feeling this way on the field, they want to be thought of as special in the classroom. With positive reinforcement coming from the classroom teacher, all of the kids entered in the program can be made to feel as though they are special—the kids are ready for it, and as it happens it makes for a much more interesting and enjoyable day/year for the teacher.

The It's "Funner" to be a Runner program costs virtually nothing to implement. The children are always

moving and involved. The program can be used with children of all ages including kindergarten youngsters. Of course, the amount of time and the process will vary with the grade level involved. Upper grade children need a great deal less instruction on ball skills, etc., than do their younger school friends. The upper grade children have numerous opportunities to participate in Little League Baseball, Pop Warner Football, organized soccer, and the like. They can afford to spend more time on the school's running field. The running will help make them more coordinated, it will help build their confidence, and it will help make them become more aware of their bodies—all of this will help them perform at a higher level in the above listed activities.



In addition to costing virtually nothing to implement, and being appropriate for all ages, the program is also quite simple to put in effect. It basically involves the desire of an interested and concerned teacher to motivate a group of youngsters who, if given the opportunity, would love to utilize what comes naturally to most of them. The teacher then takes advantage of the kids' excitement and feelings of accomplishment as he/she utilizes the program in the classroom during math, reading, social studies, language, snack time, and any other part of the day. The program can also be extended outside of the classroom—"weekend field trips at the races!"

IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER:
SPECIFIC STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following specific steps for implementing the It's "Funner" to be a Runner program should be used as a guide as you begin the program. It is important that you become thoroughly acquainted with the accompanying text—you will find it to be an invaluable tool.

1. Motivate the children with the help of the videotape of the PM Magazine segment of Pete Saccone's It's "Funner" to be a Runner program. The tape is available at the district Instructional Media Center.

2. Tell the kids that their P.E. program is going to be different. They will be walking, jogging and running, and maybe entering weekend road races if they want to. Explain that they don't have to jog or run, but they do have to walk. Discuss the obvious benefits of aerobic exercise. (See pages 6 and 7 of the text.)

3. Tell the kids what little equipment they will use as their program takes shape. (See page 7 of the text.)

4. Take the children on the field and walk with them for twenty minutes. You may want to do a few minutes of stretching exercises before the walk. Either stretch or walk/jog slowly before each day's activity. (See pages 6 and 9 of the text.)

5. When you return to class explain that twenty minutes of walking covered about a mile. Ask the kids how far the class "traveled"! Pull the map down and show them that they went from here to there in twenty minutes. Explain how much fun it will be to see how far they can go in a given period of time. (See pages 10, 11 and 12 of the text.)

6. Send the parent letter home. A sample copy of the letter is in the appendix.

7. Continue to ease into the program as day two begins. Walk for twenty minutes or less for a few days. After a few days, walk and jog for the twenty minutes. A few days later, walk, jog and/or run for a somewhat longer period of time. The amount of time and pace will take care of itself. Soon, the kids see what they are capable of doing and they get excited. (See page 9 of the text: SOME HELPFUL HINTS.)

8. As you continue to ease into the program, and if you have decided to use the classroom segment of the program, begin to integrate reading, writing, math, art, etc., during the school day. (See pages 10, 11, and 12 of the text.)

9. If you decide to use the outside of school segment of the program, obtain entry forms for a given race. (See pages 13 and 14 of the text.)

10. As you implement the program take into consideration the quality of the air, the air temperature and the health condition of the children. There are very few days in El Cajon that do not allow the children to participate in the program. Also, there are very few health conditions that do not permit a child to at least walk. Remember that the It's "Funner" to be a Runner program is part of your P.E. program and no permission slips need to be obtained from a parent/guardian.

The children might be a little reluctant at first, but as you exhibit your erthusiasm and your positive approach, they will soon accept the program. Keep in mind that the youngsters, for the most part, have never been exposed to this type of activity—covering "long" distances sounds terrible and painful! You will be amazed how quickly these same youngsters begin to sense a feeling of accomplishment as they circle the field. Children run naturally. Once they get over the initial "shock" of doing something that is foreign to them, and once they do sense this feeling of accomplishment, it will soon be evident now well most kids do at this important aerobic activity. As you reinforce their gains and excitement much begins to happen—the kids will look forward to their P.E. period each day.

The children need to be aware of a few "rules."

1. There needs to be a warm-up of some type. If there is time for slow stretching take advantage of it. If not, it is very important that the kids walk or jog their first three or four minutes on the field. After this time period they can pick up the pace if they choose to. Time/speed should be discouraged—distance covered should be encouraged. The distance covered should be at a "comfortable" pace.

2. They don't have to run if they choose not to; however, if they choose to walk, they must walk alone and not discourage others from running.

3. As they circle the field they are not to touch anyone or in any way interfere with one's running.

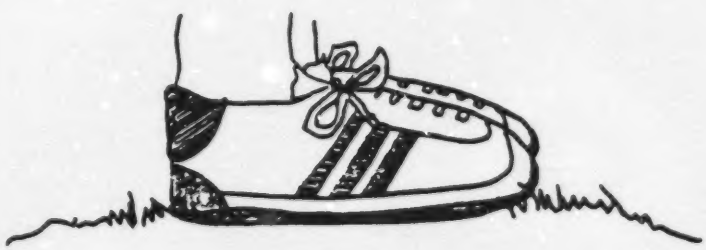
4. They should always have shorts and "running" shoes. If they choose to forget their equipment they need to know that they will perform in whatever they wear. (They need to be allowed to change their clothes before P.E. This does not present a problem—many kids wear their shorts under their slacks, etc. Also, the children have no trouble getting shorts and shoes.)

There are no other rules—it's really simple—the kids put one foot in front of the other and they have a good time as they build strong cardiovascular and respiratory systems and very positive self-images. If any child decides that he does not want to live by these few rules he/she is simply not allowed the privilege of participating in the program.

The children will be able to walk/jog/run for at least thirty minutes before you know it—within three weeks. As their teacher, you will marvel at the sight of your youngsters as they circle the field with smiles on their faces and much discussion in the air. If you decide to walk with the kids it would be just fine.

Depending on the grade level, you can decide how long you want the children to walk/jog/run. You will soon learn how much of this activity a given age child can handle. You also need to consider other activities for the kids, especially at the lower grades. The program can be used as a unit for a number of weeks, it can be used as the P.E. program for the entire year with the older children, or it can be used during half of the P.E. period at given times of the year or all year. You will be the judge. The obvious benefits that are derived from the program will help you determine the time that you will spend with it.

As stated previously, the program is not difficult to implement. To help you put it together, a videotape containing publicity that has been given to the program is available along with much written material and a slide presentation. All of this is listed in the appendix.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS

1. The It's "Funner to be a Runner program is not a complicated program—keep it that way. The true bottom line is a group of kids putting one foot in front of the other as they walk, jog, and run.

2. Ease into the program. Get the kids excited and then walk for twenty minutes for a few days. After a few days, walk and jog for the twenty minutes. A few days later walk, jog, and/or run for a somewhat longer period of time. The amount of time and pace will take care of itself. Soon, the kids see what they are capable of doing and they get excited—all you need to do is reinforce this excitement.

3. Help make the kids feel special—they are doing something that is special. Compliment them for having their shoes and shorts at school; tell them they are losing weight; let them know that they are real athletes; make them aware of what they are doing for their bodies; point out that there are a lot of physical, mental, emotional and social changes taking place because they are doing something special; and above all, let them know you are proud to be a part of what they are accomplishing.

4. The program is a natural for getting parents and other family members involved—take advantage of this—the spinoffs from this will make your teaching job much easier and more enjoyable.

5. Integrate the physical education segment of this program with the classroom segment. Here is where your job becomes much more rewarding and interesting. (The following pages contain information regarding the classroom segment of the program.)

6. If you desire and/or have the time and help to take part in the out of school activity part of the program, by all means do so. The benefits to the kids are enormous—of course, these benefits are passed on to you. (Part three of this booklet will cover this segment of the program.)

7. Finally, don't be overwhelmed and don't get discouraged. Remember it's simple. The kids will take to the program naturally, and they will motivate each other with their excitement and enthusiasm. All you need to do is show an interest in them and give them the opportunity to be a part of the program. If you want to be physically involved with the walking, jogging and running, it will be an added bonus. Keep in mind that the program in its fullest is shown in this booklet, but you can use as much or as little as you see fit for the youngsters with whom you work.

IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: CLASSROOM SEGMENT

Now that you have put together a special physical education program, let's see how you can use it in the classroom. The It's "Funner" to be a Runner program is called a physical education/classroom program because of the ease of integrating the the physical aspects of the program with what takes place in the classroom. As you do this you are reinforcing all of the positive things that have taken place on the field. The rewards to the teacher are numerous. You soon find that you are working with a group of children who feel good about themselves physically and academically. You will be working with kids who have a special reason to come to school—absenteeism will be down considerably. You will be working with kids who have fewer problems in the area of discipline, who get along well with each other and who get interested in proper nutrition, who get more and better rest, who are humble in spite of the fact that they are special, and, in general, you will be working with a group of youngsters who are going to be better educated because they feel better about themselves—and isn't that the bottom line!

Following are some of the things that can be done to integrate the physical segment of the program with the classroom segment:

1. Compliments and praise are cheap—let the kids know they are doing something special and that they are special. If you are honest as you do this, the kids will never get tired of hearing your voice.

2. Have the kids write during the first ten minutes of the day. Read their comments and put notes on their papers. Soon you have a neat dialogue going on between you and your students. Do this every day. In addition to learning a lot about the kids and how they live, you will

quickly experience much writing regarding how many laps they ran the day before, how much they like it, and how they can't wait until the end of the day and their P.E. period. It doesn't take much to write, "Jason, you're really becoming quite a runner!" The kids love it!

3. As you will see in segment three, the kids will have a chance to run in weekend road races. Most race directors will let the kids run at a reduced rate or for free. The kids can write thank you letters to these race directors. It's a natural! Of course, much is learned through letter writing. The children who choose not to run in the race should be allowed to write letters to anyone they choose.

4. There are unlimited possibilities in the math area. The kids can keep a calendar as they record each day's laps/miles. Much can be extracted from this calendar. The children can add their total laps, convert the laps to miles, get the class total for the week, average their daily, weekly, monthly totals, obtain the class average in these areas, create graphs, round off totals, estimate figures, and much more. Subtraction, multiplication and division become more meaningful and interesting as the kids do these operations in conjunction with their running. You can utilize the running with the metric system. The kids will soon learn what a 10,000 meter run is if they plan to participate in it. The field could be laid out in meters and much more could be done with the metric system. Again, the possibilities are unlimited—you will come up with many ideas.

5. Reading and running are easily integrated. More and more is being written about running. More children's books on running are now available. If the children enter races they need to know how to fill out the entry form. The newspaper, San Diego Running, is available free at sporting goods stores and running shops—the kids love reading it. You will find a copy of the BOSTON READATHON and a certificate that goes with it in the appendix. In order to finish this readathon the kids must read a certain number of minutes each evening. The child's parent must initial that mile mark. To advance from mile one to two, the kids need to read for five minutes. To advance from mile 20 they need to read for fifty minutes.

6. The children get motivated in the area of geography as they use maps and books with their running. It's fun to take a map with a scale of fifty miles to an inch and then determine where the number of miles that you or your class have run will take you. You can pick a place and do a great deal of research about that place. Maps, direction, and places become more interesting.

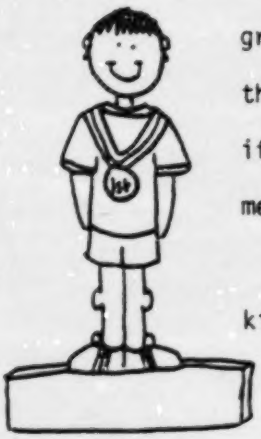
7. Running and art mix very well. Kids love to depict what and how they feel. Kids who run are proud of what they do and they love to put their thoughts and feelings on paper. They become very creative.

8. The areas of science, health, and nutrition are fun to use with the children as they run. Much can be done with the body systems, body chemistry, and personal hygiene. The kids really become involved and interested with sound nutrition as they grow in the running program. They learn to think twice before they put anything into their bodies. Of course, alcohol, drugs and tobacco are items that a healthy person isn't going to want to get involved with—if given the opportunity to be a part of the running program, the kids will have gotten off to a great start in their young age.

9. Any other area that the kids are involved in during the school day can be integrated with the running program. Recess and lunch periods become more enjoyable for the kids and others because you have motivated the kids to use their energy on the running field, not in the cafeteria, etc. If you tell the kids that they are special, they will act in special ways—this fact and the actual running help to keep the kids calm and productive.

There are probably many more ways to integrate the physical segment of the running program with the classroom segment. You will be the first to find these ways. Don't be afraid to use them. You can integrate as much as you like or as little as you like—you will find it easy to decide. As you integrate the two segments, the physical, mental, emotional, social, and academic results will be pleasantly positive.

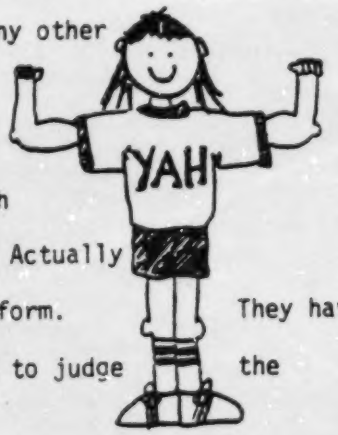
IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL SEGMENT



The third and last segment of the It's "Funner" to be a Runner program is the outside of school activities segment. As with the rest of the program the teacher will need to decide if he/she has the desire and/or time, and help to implement this section or any part of it.

This last segment simply involves encouraging the kids to put to use one of the many benefits derived from the program—the ability to run in organized road races. The races vary in distance from two mile fun runs up to the twenty-six and two tenths of a mile marathon. Initially, the youngsters will participate in the two, three, and six and two tenths of a mile races.

There are races each and every weekend. The kids love to participate in them. The teacher would give the kids the entry forms for the races. (The appendix contains a list of places where forms may be obtained.) The teacher could call the race director and request a reduction in the cost of the race—most of them will say yes. The kids who choose to run in the races would arrange their own weekend transportation—kids offer each other rides—the kids and parents of all the families get to know each other quite well and there is a lot of cooperation. The teacher does not have to get involved with transportation or in any other aspect of the weekend race unless he/she so desires.



Much occurs at these races. It's as though the children were on an educational field trip. Actually they are. They are given the opportunity to perform. They have to do it themselves. There will be no one there to judge the

performance—a child will succeed simply because he/she was there. At the races the kids are amongst people who are healthy—people who don't smoke, people who take care of themselves—these few hundred to a few thousand people are good models for the kids.

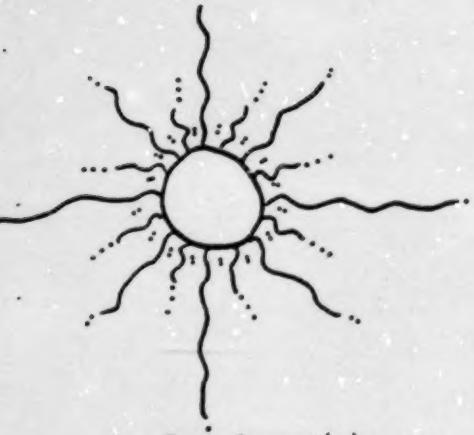
There are awards for all the different age groups. The kids get their share—they feel proud.

Often the different families who participate in the races get together at the race site for a post-race picnic. It's wonderful to see the kids and their families sharing fun times.

The kids leave the race with feelings of accomplishment. They come to school on Monday wearing their souvenir T-shirts, they see the cutout paper shoe that you created and posted on the bulletin board. (See appendix page 18) The shoe has the child's name and the name of the race that was completed on it. They feel good about themselves. They are ready for a day of learning and running. They don't need to prove a thing to anyone.

This third segment does take some teacher involvement, and it could take a lot of involvement. You will have to decide how actively you want to participate in it.

APPENDIX



Date

Dear Parent(s):

Your child will soon be participating in a unique physical education/ classroom program. This highly accepted and successful program should bring about some noticeable changes within your child.

As you know, a child will perform better academically, socially, and emotionally if he/she is physically fit and if he/she has a positive self-image. The program that your child will be participating in helps bring about a sound cardiovascular system with respiratory efficiency, a general physical well-being, and better feelings about himself/herself. All of this, in turn, helps your child develop into a well rounded individual.

The name of the program is IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER. Your child will walk, jog, and run during his/her P.E. period. This physical activity will then be integrated into the classroom when feasible. If your child so chooses, he/she will eventually have the opportunity to participate in weekend road races.

Please encourage your child to participate positively in our program. You will be pleased with the noticeable changes in your child and the positive results from the program. Please do not hesitate to participate with us.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER: MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

Places where race entry forms may be obtained

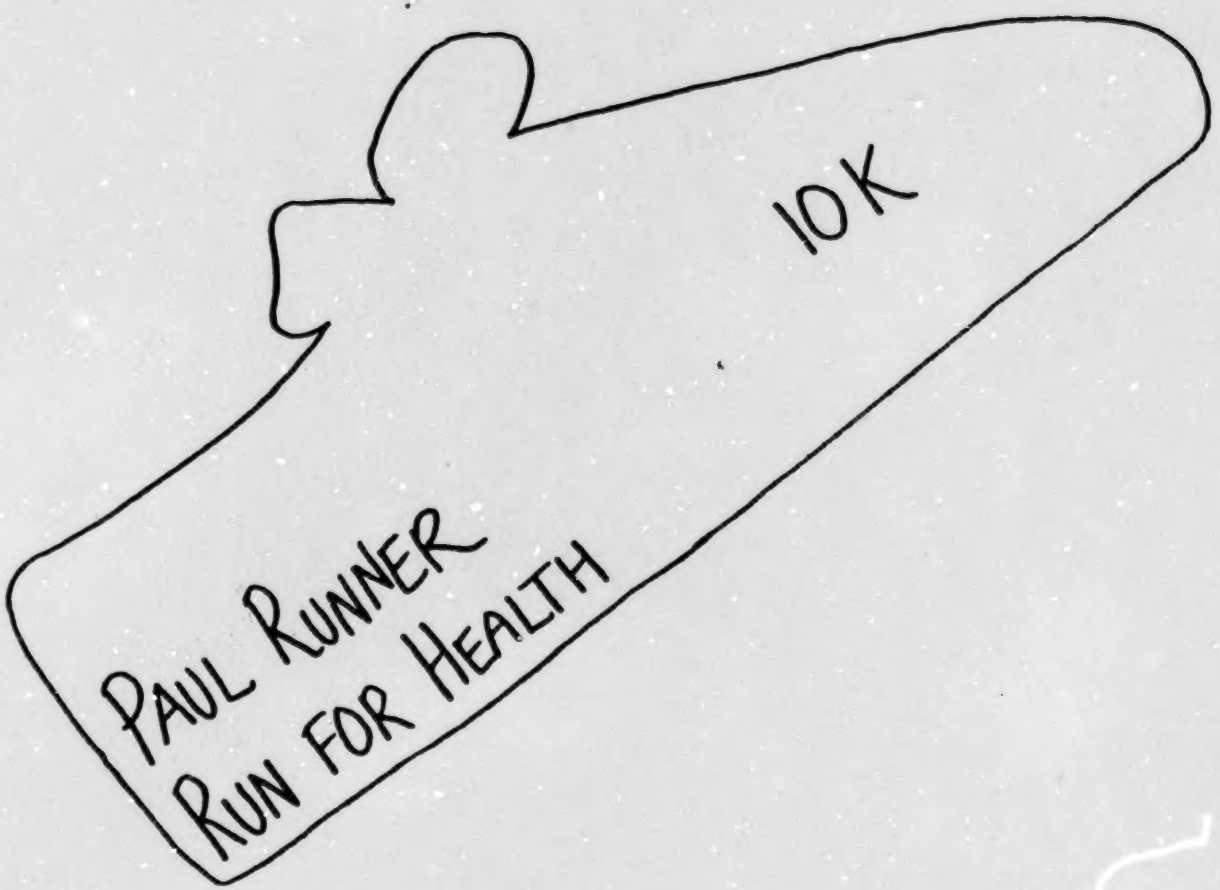
Phidippides Sports Centers - 4360 Bonita Rd., Bonita - 267-2441
3740 Sports Arena Blvd., San Diego - 222-7161

Second Sole Athletic Shoes - 4941 A Clairemont Dr., San Diego - 273-0773
1131 5th Ave., San Diego - 239-9577
324 Broadway, El Cajon - 444-1623
437 Encinitas Blvd., Encinitas - 436-6222
The Vineyard in Escondido - 741-3320
3904 Convoy, San Diego - 565-0401
1528 D Sweetwater Rd., National City-474-4743
3350 Sports Arena Blvd., San Diego-224-0181
4649 College Ave., San Diego - 286-1122

The Soccer Man - Big Bear Shopping Center, El Cajon - 442-0225
3740 Sports Arena Blvd., San Diego - 223-7888

A videotape presentation of the IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER program is available at the district Instructional Media Center. It features Pete Saccone's fifth grade class on the three local television news shows and on PM Magazine. A unique slide presentation of Pete Saccone's running program is also available at the IMC.

It's "Funner" to be a Runner



T shirt design sample

It's "Funner" to be

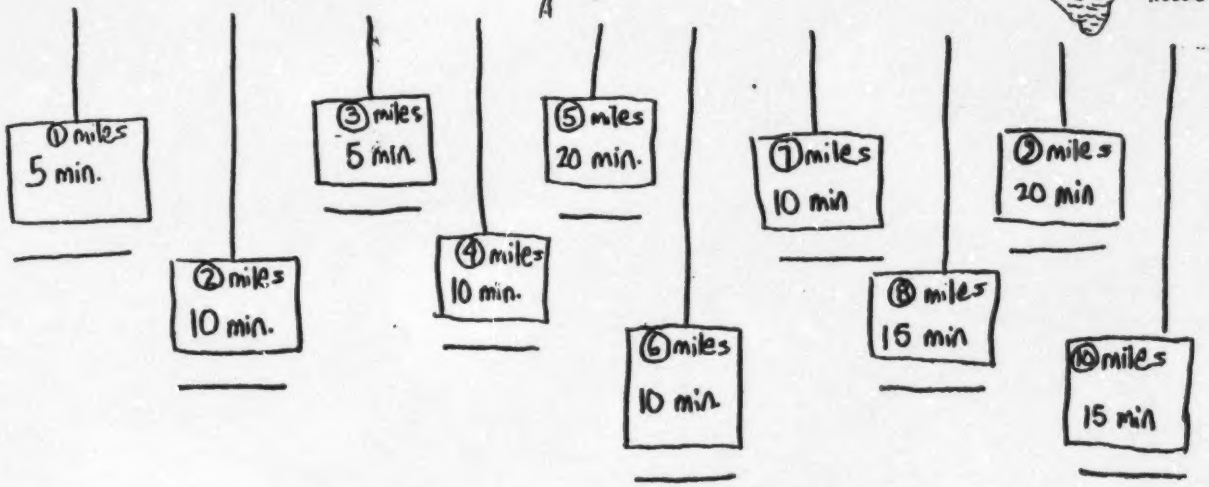
©1981 Pete and Liz Saccone

a Runner!

Meridian Elementary
Room 14 · 81-82

*Please contact Pete Saccone regarding the authorized distributor of the T-shirt.

BOSTON READATHON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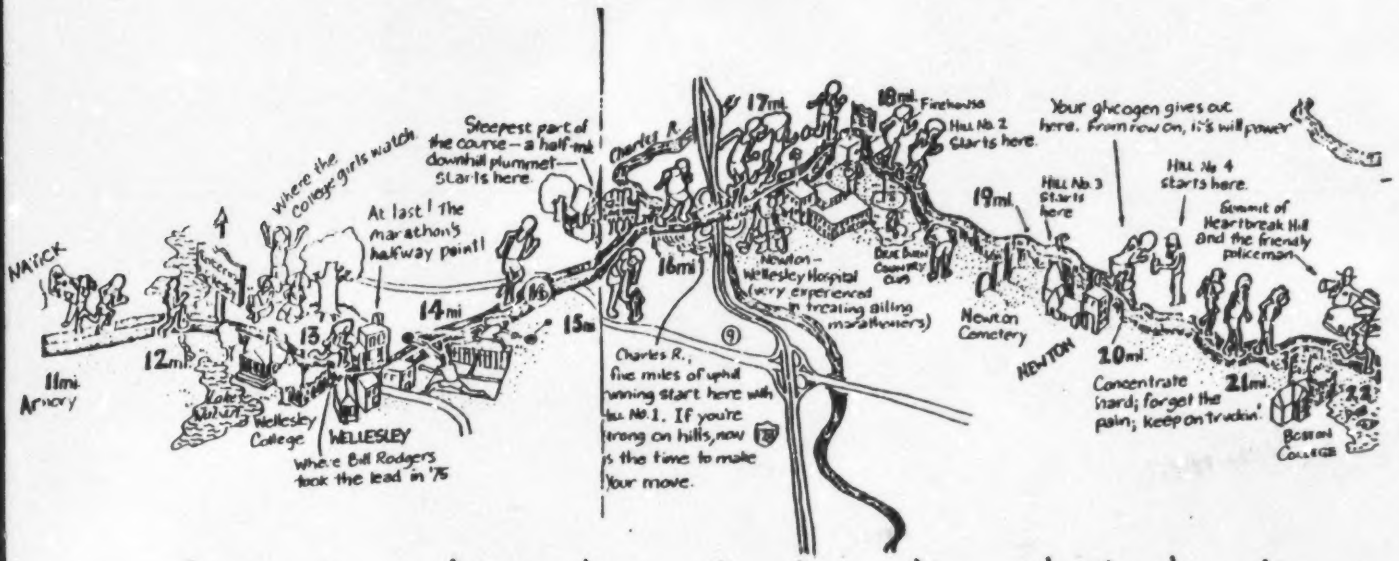
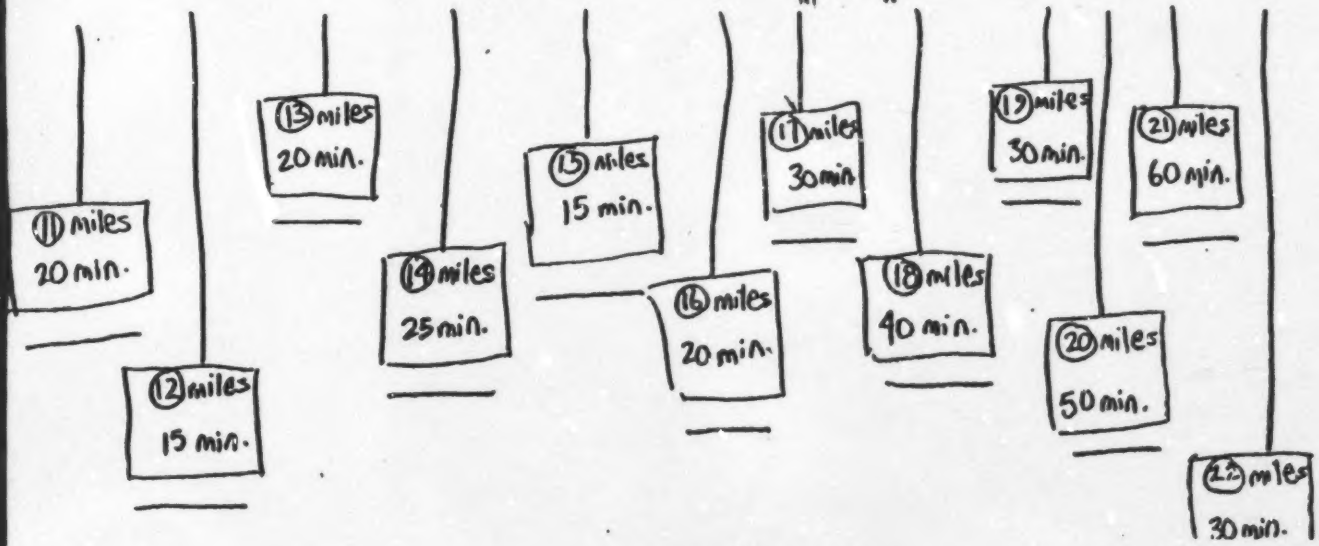
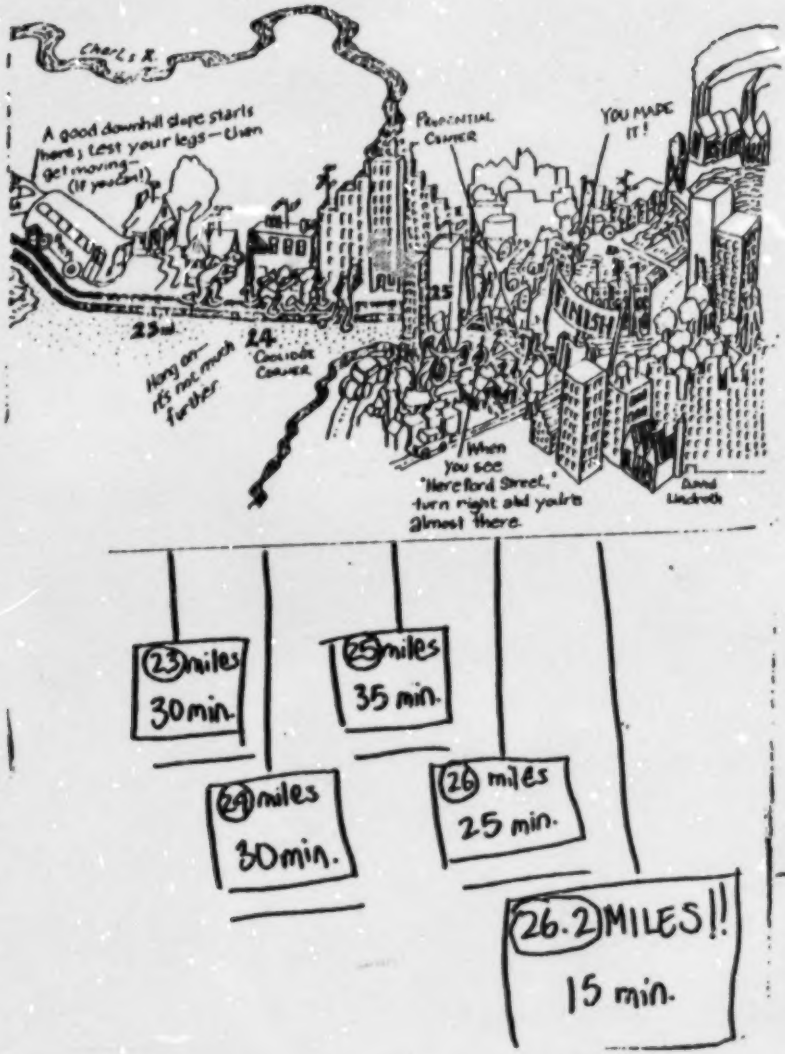

NATICK
11mi
Armory
12mi
Lake Waban
Wellesley College
13
WELLESLEY
Where Bill Rodgers took the lead in '75
14mi
At last! The marathon's halfway point!
Where the college girls watch
Steepest part of the course — a half-mi downhill plummet — starts here.
15mi
16mi
Charles R.
Charles R., five miles of uphill running start here with Hill No. 1. If you're strong on hills, now is the time to make your move.
Newton-Wellesley Hospital (very experienced in treating ailing marathoners)
17mi
18mi
Firehouse
Hill No. 2 starts here
Beaver Brook Country Club
19mi
Hill No. 3 starts here
Newton Cemetery
NEWTON
Your glycogen gives out here. From now on, it's will power
Hill No. 4 starts here.
Summit of Heartbreak Hill and the friendly policeman
20mi.
Concentrate hard; forget the pain; keep on truckin'
21mi.
Boston College


11 miles 20 min.
12 miles 15 min.
13 miles 20 min.
14 miles 25 min.
15 miles 15 min.
16 miles 20 min.
17 miles 30 min.
18 miles 40 min.
19 miles 30 min.
20 miles 50 min.
21 miles 60 min.
22 miles 30 min.


A good downhill slope starts here; test your legs—then get moving—(if you can!)
Charles R.
Providential Corner
YOU MADE IT!
23rd
24
Commonwealth Corner
Hang on—it's not much further
25
FINISH
When you see "Hereford Street," turn right and you're almost there.
Boylston
23 miles 30 min.
25 miles 35 min.
24 miles 30 min.
26 miles 25 min.
26.2 MILES!! 15 min.

COLOR WHEN YOU COMPLETE THE READATHON!
BOSTON

This certifies that _____ has faithfully completed the Boston Read A Thon on the _____ day of _____, 1981.

Fifth Grade · Meridian Elementary School · Room 14

_____ teacher

_____ parent

Boston Read A Thon certificate sample

OUTSTANDING PROGRAM DESCRIPTION FORM

Name of School, District or Agency MERIDIAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CAJON VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DIST Grade Levels K-6

Address 651 S. THIRD ST. Telephone (619) 588-3083

City EL CAJON, CA State CA Zip 92021

Name of Contact Person PETER P. SACCONE ACSA Region 1

Name of Course, Program, Project or Policy IT'S "FUNNER" TO BE A RUNNER PHYSICAL EDUCATION/ CLASSROOM PROGRAM

Date of Operation of Program or Project 9-82 - present

In 300 words or less please describe your program specifically enough for others to follow. Please include your program's
(1) primary purpose (how it benefits students)
(2) participants (grade levels of students, professional staff, community persons, etc)
(3) evaluation data (if available)

The following should be added after the attached:

After three and one half years that the program has been in progress, it appears that students' feelings about themselves become more positive Test scores average 22 months in reading and 25 months in math. Students involved in the program are less likely to be absent, parents, teachers, and principal speak to a decrease in discipline problems at school and at home, a core of strong parent support is generated, and comradery and friendships develop among students.

The It's "Funner" to be a Runner manual is available. It gives detailed instructions how to implement the program.

SP023845

Permission to reproduce this program description and accompanying materials (if any) is granted to ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center).

NAME Peter P. Saccone DATE 2/13/84

Enclose supporting or descriptive materials and return to ACSA Public Confidence Task Force, Public Relations Department, 1517 L Street, Sacramento, CA 95814.